

## A Meaningful Job: Like and Enjoy

When you learn English, one of the first words you learn is 'love.' And—because you're a good student of English—you know that you can love a person (in Germany, at least, everyone knows the phrase “I love you.”) as well as an activity: “I love skiing.”

So, we won't talk about the word 'love' today. But learning to talk about your job means using the verbs 'to like' and 'to enjoy.' And today we *are* going to talk about them and how to use them.

'Like' and 'enjoy' have very similar meanings. Both verbs require you to use them with a direct object. In the following sentences 'piano music' is the direct object:

- I like piano music.
- I enjoy piano music.

Both verbs express positive feelings about the direct objects. In both of the example sentences, it's clear that the speaker thinks piano music is something good. But there is a little bit of difference, in the meaning and in how we use the two verbs. And that's what we're talking about today.

### I Like Ice Cream

Who doesn't like ice cream? The verb 'to like' means that you think something is good. Consider these examples:

- She likes her boss.
- I like flying more than driving.
- Richard likes to drive too fast.

The verb like *can* mean that something gives you pleasure, or a good feeling. The example “Richard likes to drive too fast” certainly sounds like Richard gets a good feeling from driving too fast. And when I say “I like ice cream,” you certainly think I get pleasure from ice cream, right?

But all that like has to mean is that something is good. “She likes her boss,” doesn't mean that she gets a good feeling from her boss. It only means that she thinks her boss is good. When we talk about the verb 'to enjoy,' in a moment, we'll see the difference: enjoy always means that something gives pleasure.

Using 'like' is easy. In our example sentences, we see the three different ways to use the verb. In the first example, 'her boss' is a noun. And using 'like' with a noun is easy: just put the noun after the word like! Here are some examples:

- My cats don't like eggs.

- They like his music.
- We like steak with red wine.

Using 'like' with a verb isn't too hard, either. But there is a little more to do when you talk about a verb that you like. It's possible to use 'like' with the -ing form of the verb (called the gerund) like in these examples:

- I like swimming.
- Do you like learning English?
- Mary likes reading.

It's also possible to use 'like' with the 'to' form of the verb (this is called the infinitive). Here are some examples:

- We like to eat pizza.
- My mother likes to bake.
- My wife doesn't like to clean up after me!

Here's where some of my students make mistakes. They want to combine 'to' with the -ing form of the verb. *Don't do that!* You have to choose one or the other, though there isn't any difference in meaning.

## **I Enjoy Ice Cream**

Who doesn't enjoy ice cream? I certainly enjoy ice cream. Here's the difficult thing: with the ice cream example, 'like' and 'enjoy' have the same meaning. But you don't normally say “~~I enjoy my mom.~~” In general, we use 'like' with people.

We *only* use 'enjoy' for things that give us pleasure. Often, when we use it with nouns, it's things we eat or drink: “I enjoy good coffee.” Or something that we 'consume' in another way: “He really enjoys jazz music.” Here are some more examples:

- The President enjoys that TV show.
- We enjoy action movies.
- He doesn't enjoy that kind of humor.

Just like the verb 'like,' using 'enjoy' with a normal noun is pretty easy: you just use the noun like you would any direct object. Using 'enjoy' with a verb, however, is a little bit more difficult. It's

*impossible* to use 'enjoy' with the 'to' form of a verb. You just can't do it. We use 'enjoy' only with the '-ing' form of verbs:

- She enjoys watching movies.
- They enjoy visiting you.
- We don't enjoy waiting for late trains.

### **It's That Simple**

This really isn't super hard. There are some important things to remember:

- 'Like' means something is positive.
- 'Enjoy' means something—normally something you do or consume—gives you pleasure.
- Almost never use 'enjoy' with a person.
- You can use both verbs with -ing verbs.
- You can only use 'like' with 'to' verbs.

### **Practice Makes Perfect**

If anything in this entry wasn't review for you, my advice is to practice it. And not just a little.

Write down lists of things you like—but use full sentences. (You want to practice using the word 'like,' you don't need to practice making lists.) Make sure you use the word 'like' correctly. Make a list of the things you don't like. And then do the same thing with 'enjoy.'

In the next couple of days, try to find chances to use both verbs—even if you're the only one who hears them—and make sure that you're using them correctly. By using—and thinking about—both words, you'll quickly master them. When the exercise is so easy it's boring, you've done it enough.

Think you have this mastered? Then try these questions:

- What do you like about your job?
- What don't you like about your job?
- What tasks do you enjoy doing at work?
- Are there any tasks you don't enjoy doing? What are they?
- Do you enjoy doing your job? Is there another job you'd enjoy more?